

The Honorable Carlos Romero-Barceló

**Statement for the Subcommittee on Domestic and International
Monetary Policy**

September 7, 2000

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling this hearing and providing me the opportunity to submit this statement in favor of H.R. 5010, a bill that would include the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands in the Circulating Quarter Dollar Program Act. I am a strong supporter of H.R. 5010 and I am hopeful this bill can be passed by the House and signed into law before the end of the 106th Congress.

The 50 States Commemorative Coin Program, begun in 1999, allows all of the 50 states to select a design for the reverse side of the quarter coin that commemorates their history. Five states per year will

have quarters minted, selected according to the order in which the states ratified the Constitution or were admitted to the Union. I am a strong supporter of this act because it encourages greater knowledge of the history and culture of each individual state in the U.S. Such knowledge strengthens our bond as a nation and helps our citizens understand and respect the diversity within our borders

The Commemorative Quarter Act has quickly become one of the most successful currency programs and has gained in popularity with each newly minted state coin. This, in turn, promotes and gives residents of the respective states a sense of pride. All of the U.S. citizens in the territories also want to experience this sense of pride, both in the particular area where they live and in being citizens of the United States.

I speak on behalf of the four million American citizens of Puerto

Rico in expressing that it would be an honor for us to participate in this program. We have been U.S. citizens since 1917 and we embrace this program because it allows us to demonstrate our pride in the relationship between our island and the United States. I believe it is important for the Congress to act quickly and pass this bill, to show respect for the patriotism of the people in the territories and to fully and equitably represent the diversity of America.

I would like to thank Chairman Bachus for his leadership in bringing H.R. 5010 for a hearing and to thank his predecessor as subcommittee chairman, Michael Castle, for introducing the Commemorative Quarters program and working with us to include the territories. I would also like to thank Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton of the District of Columbia and my colleagues representing the territories for working with me on achieving this important victory for equality for all U.S. citizens.